



# California Department of Veterans Affairs

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## NEWS FOR VETERANS

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January 25, 2005

### NBC NIGHTLY NEWS WITH BRIAN WILLIAMS

#### COMING HOME – WHAT DO WE OWE OUR VETERANS?

NBC Nightly News is airing a series of reports this week titled *“Coming Home – What Do We Owe Our Veterans?”* Catch these informative and hard-hitting reports on returning veterans from the Iraq war.

Additional information on this topic, such as a list of resources and contact numbers to help service members, former and current, and their families seek benefits, links to Military aid and assistance organizations, and a list of agencies that help homeless veterans can be found on NBC Nightly News’ website at <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/3032619/>. More information on benefits for veterans can accessed at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) and the California Department of Veterans Affairs website at [www.cdva.ca.gov](http://www.cdva.ca.gov). CDVA maintains a handy and useful benefits directory, which can be accessed on our homepage or by clicking here: [www.cdva.ca.gov/cdva/benefits.asp](http://www.cdva.ca.gov/cdva/benefits.asp).

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### NEWS FROM GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER

#### GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENTS TO CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD 01/21/2005

Dr. Vernon Chong, 71, of Lincoln, has been appointed to the Veterans Board. He most recently served as special assistant to the network director of Veterans Integrated Service Network, based in San Francisco. He is also a 31-year Air Force veteran. Chong has served on the Veterans Board since 2004. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$100 per diem. Chong is a Republican.

William Jackson, 75, of Barstow, has been appointed to the Veterans Board. He is a retired real estate agent and equipment rental yard operator. Jackson served in the Army from 1950 to 1957. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is \$100 per diem. Jackson is a Democrat.

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### CONTRIBUTE TO TSUNAMI RELIEF

Californians wishing to contribute to assist victims of the December 26<sup>th</sup> Tsunami which struck in the Indian Ocean affecting people in coastal regions of Sumatra, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and others can contribute through January 31, 2005 and still claim it on their 2004 state and federal income taxes.

Farmers, ranchers, veterans, and others are encouraged to contribute to helping tsunami victims by visiting the Friends of the World Food Program at [www.friendsofwfp.org](http://www.friendsofwfp.org) and clicking on "Tsunami Relief Efforts." Folks wishing to contribute through the American Red Cross can visit their website at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) and clicking on the appropriate link under "Tsunami Relief Effort." Together we can and will make a difference in helping our fellowman recover from the devastating effects of this horrible tragedy.

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## **IMPORTANT NEWS FOR VETERANS REGARDING INFLUENZA VACCINES**

### **THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE DATED JANUARY 21, 2005 IS FROM THE USDVA'S UNDERSECRETARY FOR HEALTH**

Further expansion of criteria for members of the VA community who may receive influenza vaccine. We have been fortunate that the influenza season, to date, has been mild in most areas of the Nation this season while we worked together to first distribute vaccine to those most at risk from the illness. Now that this distribution has been accomplished, it is time to offer remaining vaccine broadly throughout VA. Influenza often occurs into the spring, and vaccination remains the most effective way to prevent illness in individuals and to control outbreaks. Influenza activity is increasing, particularly in eastern states, as of this writing.

It appears that most VA facilities have completed vaccination of priority groups defined in our VA Influenza Vaccine Advisories #1-5 and there is still vaccine available in the VA system. Therefore, effective immediately, VA policy on influenza vaccination will be the following:

- a. Continue to encourage flu vaccination for any unvaccinated veterans and health care workers in the highest priority groups as outlined in Advisories #1, 2, and 3 (available at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov>)
- b. As supplies are available in the judgment of VISN directors, continue vaccination of members of the VA community who meet the expanded CDC criteria of December 17, 2004 as outlined in VA Influenza Vaccine Advisory #5:
  - Enrolled veterans aged 50-64
  - Enrolled veterans who are out-of-home caregivers or household contacts of persons in CDC high-risk groups
  - VA employees who meet these expanded criteria
- c. As supplies are available in the judgment of VISN directors, further expand vaccine eligibility to any member of the VA community (veteran, employee, or volunteer) who does not have contraindications for influenza vaccine and who wishes to be vaccinated following guidance in the CDC "Prevention and Control of Influenza: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), MMWR May 28, 2004/Vol. 53/RR6; 1-40. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5306a1.htm>

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